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SUBJECT: SYG'S REPORT ON UNSCR 1701 IMPLEMENTATION:
GUIDANCE FOR THE NOVEMBER 25 UNSC BRIEFING

¶1. (U) This is an action message. USUN is authorized to draw from points in para 2 below during the briefing on the Secretary General's report on implementation of UNSCR 1701 scheduled for November 25.

¶2. (U) Talking points.

-- I would like to thank the Secretary General for his latest report on implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 on the situation in the Middle East.

-- We welcome this report, and its strong reaffirmation of the international community's support for the sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity, and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally-recognized borders and under the exclusive authority of its Government.

-- The Secretary General has taken a realistic approach in his report, underscoring the need for greater progress on all of the key issues required for a permanent ceasefire and long-term solution.

-- Of particular import is his emphasis on the porous nature of the Lebanon's border with Syria and the continuing potential for breaches of the arms embargo. Full implementation of the embargo is an indispensable and fundamental provision of resolution 1701 that must be observed immediately, comprehensively and without exception. Regional parties that maintain ties with Hizballah and other groups in Lebanon are obliged to respect and abide fully by its provisions.

-- Unfortunately, there are persistent reports of breaches of the arms embargo along the Lebanon-Syria border. As the Secretary General points out, there has still been no decisive impact on Lebanon's overall border security and "this situation renders Lebanon's borders as penetrable as was the case one year ago." While it is a positive sign that many stakeholders are taking note of this problem, we look forward to real progress on the ground in the near future.

-- The Secretary General is also right to express his clear concern over the continued maintenance by Hizballah of a substantial military capacity distinct from that of the Lebanese State. Two years after the international conflict instigated by Hizballah, the rearmament of this group remains the most important matter for the Council to consider in Lebanon with regard to its duty to safeguard international peace and security.

-- As the Secretary General points out, Hizballah's maintenance of a separate military is in direct contravention of both UNSCR 1701 and 1559(2004). This poses a continuing risk to the sovereignty of the State. Events in Lebanon in May of this year demonstrated yet again the serious threat that armed groups outside of the control of the State pose to the stability of Lebanon.

-- While we note the Secretary General's satisfaction at

the completion of the prisoner exchange as encouraged in UNSCR 1701, it is worth noting that this exchange was not between two legitimate governments, but between Israel and an internationally recognized terrorist organization.

-- The lack of control over arms smuggling across the Lebanese-Syrian border is connected to Hizballah's efforts to further upgrade its military power. Both these trends must be reversed in the interest of international peace and security both within Lebanon and with respect to its neighbors.

-- In the report, The Secretary General notes Israel's statement on the connection between overflights of Lebanese territory and the lack of enforcement of the arms embargo. While we do not excuse violations of the Blue Line, we can understand the compelling interest that Israel has in gaining information on Hizballah's rearmament efforts so that it can maintain its own security and avoid another outbreak of violence.

-- We would also like to take this opportunity to reiterate our support for the decision by Syria and Lebanon to establish full diplomatic relations, and look forward to the implementation of that accord within the next month as they have declared. Full normalization must also include delineation of the Lebanese-Syrian border, as both sides have agreed.

-- Similarly, we welcome the Secretary General's intention to strengthen the diplomatic process aimed at dealing with the issues of northern Ghajar, and we applaud his intention to strengthen the diplomatic process aimed at dealing with the issue of the Shab'a Farms area, the status of which can only be resolved via border delineation by Lebanon and Syria. We urge him to engage directly with Israel, Lebanon and Syria on these issues.

-- We welcome the Secretary General's call for all parties to refrain from statements and actions that could serve to increase tension, and remain concerned about Hizballah's unacceptable efforts to rearm both north and south of the Litani and consistent aggressive rhetoric against Israel.

-- Finally, noting Israel's continuing concern about Hizballah rearming south of the Litani river, we reiterate our support for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and welcome the clear progress on furthering cooperation between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), which is aimed at addressing this issue.

-- We also strongly support the work of the UN Independent Investigative Commission and look forward to the opening of a Special Tribunal for Lebanon.

End talking points.
RICE